period of time; unless the ponds are properly lined.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Prawn farms need State Pollution Control Board's consent to establish and operate, and the board can lay down appropriate conditions to prevent seepage of salt water into the adjoining ground water tables.

Water cess is chargeable on the sea water pumped into prawn farms and this acts as a disincentive to the excessive use of sea water for prawn cultivaiton.

Proposals pending under Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980

7662. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 202 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd February, 1994 and state:

(a) the number of proposals which are pending under Forests (Conservation) Act with reasons therefor; and

(b) what steps have been taken up Government so that development projects are not held up because of the procedural delays under the Forests (Conservation) Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As on 31.5.1994, 143 proposals were pending with the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. These proposals were pending at various stages of examination in accordance with provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 and guidelines issued thereon.

(b) After discussing the issue in various fora including the State Forest Minister's Conference held during February 1992, it was decided to further decentralise and streamline examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Accordingly, Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 have been suitably amended on 21.5.1992 and revised consolidated guidelines for examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been issued on 25.10.1992. Revised consolidated guidelines interalia include delegation of powers to Regional Chief Conservator of Forests to finally decide proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 5 ha. excluding proposals in respect of regularisation of encroachments and mining and initial examination of all proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 20 ha. It also provides for relaxation in the norms of raising of compensatory afforestation over non forest land for certain categories of proposals.

Forest Cover in the Country

7663. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 204 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd February, 1994 and state:

(a) what is the percentage of forest cover at present in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) how does it compare with other states in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As per the State of Forest Report 1993 of the Forest Survey of India, the actual forest cover of the State of Uttar Pradesh is 11.5% of the total geographical area of the State.

(b) A comparative statement of the percentage of forest area of various States/UT's annexed.

STATEMENT

S.No.	STATE/UTs	Actual Forest Cover as % of Geographical area
1.	Andhra Pradesh	17.2
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	82.0
3.	Assam	31.2
4.	Bihar	15.3
5.	Goa (including Daman & Diu)	32.6
6.	Gujarat	6.1
7.	Haryana	1.2
8.	Himachal Pradesh	23.7
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	9.2
10.	Karnataka	16.9
11.	Kerala	26.6
12.	Madhya Pradesh	30.5
13.	Maharashtra	14.3
14.	Manipur	78.9
15.	Meghalaya	70.3
16.	Mizoram	88.7
17.	Nagaland	86.5
18.	Orissa	30.3
19.	Punjab	2.7
20.	Rajasthan	3.8
21.	Sikkim	44.0
22.	Tamil Nadu	13.6
23.	Tripura	52.8
24.	Uttar Pradesh	11.5
25.	West Bengal	9.2
26.	Andaman & Nicobar	92.4
27.	Chandigarh	4.4
28.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	42.0
29.	Delhi	1.5
30.	Lakshadweep	—
31.	Pondicherry	—
	TOTAL	19.5

Conserving the Ridge, Eco-System and Green Lung of the Capital

7664. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the real threat to the ridge at Delhi is from the protector itself;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what action Government have so far taken or propose to take to conserve the ridge, the unique eco-system and green lung of the city from extinction; and

(d) whether Government will consider for putting the ownership of the ridge in the hands of one department by forming Delhi Ridge Management Committee?

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Degradation of Delhi Ridge forest area has taken place in the past due to encroachments, diversion for non-forest purposes and felling of trees. Degradation of the Ridge has also taken place due to unauthorised occupation by certain Government Department/ Agencies.

(c) Lt. Governor of Delhi had constituted a Committee in April, 1993 comprising of representatives of Non-Government Organisations, Delhi Development Authority, Ministry of Urban Development, Delhi Administration and Ministry of Environment and Forests to suggest a management pattern of the Delhi Ridge with the objective of preserving its natural habitat. Based on the recommendations of the above mentioned Committee, certain steps have already been taken to protect the Ridge from further degradation, which includes:—

(i) Issue of notification under Section-4 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 for declaring Ridge as a reserved forest.

(ii) Appointment of a Forest Settlement Officer to look into the rights and concessions of the people.

(iii) Issue of draft notification for constitution of a Ridge Management Supervisory Committee having members from concerned Government Departments and Non-Government Organisations.

(iv) Initiation of the process of demarcation and survey of Delhi Ridge through Survey of India.

(d) Draft notification has been issued on 12.5.1994 for constitution of